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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News

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This service distributes news and information to Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian employees, and retired Navy and Marine Corps families. Further dissemination of this email is encouraged.

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Headline: Wellness of crew is paramount for USS Chosin
From Naval Surface Forces Pacific

SAN DIEGO--USS Chosin (CG 65) health programs start from the premise that the wellness of the crew is paramount to the ship's operational readiness. To ensure a well crew, Chosin's Sailors must participate in mandatory screening programs for hypertension and cholesterol. They may also participate in voluntary courses such as anger and stress management, nutrition education, pregnancy awareness classes and sexually transmitted disease, among others.

Hospital Corpsman First Class Gary Berkheimer, of Hollidayburg, Pa.; Hospital Corpsman Second Class Steve Kirstauer, of Spotswood, N.J.; and Hospital Corpsman Third Class Jeffrey Tice, of Wylie, Texas, administer the Chosin's health programs. Their efforts helped the ship earn the Surface Force Commander's Award, better known as the "Green H" award to be displayed on the ship's bridge wing. The award encourages ships to develop lifestyle programs that will keep Sailors healthy and contribute to personal readiness.

In addition to its other health efforts, Chosin also has a LEAN (Lifestyle, Exercise, Attitude and Nutrition) program that teaches weight reduction and behavior modification. According to Tice, crewmembers are benefiting from the their participation.

"Although LEAN directly impacts only a few Sailors, the impact it has on their lives is tremendous," Tice said.

Fire Control Technician Second Class Justin Storto, of

Syracuse, N.Y., found the classes informative, losing 30 pounds after participating in the program.

A cornerstone of Chosin's wellness activity is its aggressive physical fitness program. The ship ensures all Sailors have ample time to exercise and that they can engage in a variety of fun activities. For Chosin personnel who are not inclined to "pump iron," or run, when in port, the ship's wellness programs also offer rock climbing, volleyball or bicycling.

According to Berkheimer, "We are always looking for ways to improve the wellness of our Sailors."

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Headline: Single Sailors at Sigonella learn Choices
By Carlos Bongiani, European Stars and Stripes

SIGONELLA, Sicily--Young male and female single Sailors can be found carrying dolls at the U.S. Naval Air Station, Sigonella, Sicily. They are participants in a program called "Choices."

Choices is a program that has been tacked onto a mandatory three-day, Navy-wide program called PREVENT (Personal Responsibility and Values Education and Training), to curb increased unplanned pregnancies at the air station.

The Navy requires all Sailors 26 years and younger to attend the 30-hour PREVENT course when reporting to a new command. But PREVENT doesn't deal with the issues of unplanned pregnancies and single parenthood.

The Choices program offers classroom instruction, including discussions on pregnancy awareness, lifestyle changes, parent responsibilities, budgeting and sexually transmitted diseases, among other topics.

The simulated baby portion of Choices requires Sailors to spend a day caring for "Baby-Think-It-Over" dolls that replicate certain annoying characteristics of infants, such as high-pitched wails every two or three hours and it continues until someone cares for them.

"Sigonella base officials started the Choices program last November, because we noticed a great increase in single Sailor pregnancies," said Vicki Hunt, base administrator and health promotion coordinator. "Our biggest concerns are financial responsibility and the lack of family support for single Sailors stationed overseas."

Hunt said a single female Sailor who goes on a six-week deployment would pay \$1,500 to \$2,000 for 24-hour child care.

"This [course] makes you get back on track and rethink being more careful about getting a girl pregnant," said program participant Airman Robert Razzano.

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Headline: Family thanks Lemoore Hospital staff for saving infant's life

LEMOORE, Calif.--Accolades to Navy medical staffs are not always in the form of commendations and medals. Patients and their families frequently pass their appreciation for care along to their health care providers.

Such was the case at Naval Hospital, Lemoore. The father of a young woman who experienced difficulty while giving birth shared his feelings with the hospital staff and asked to remain anonymous.

He was at the hospital when his daughter gave birth to his first grandson at Naval Hospital, Lemoore. He said that what started as a perfectly natural birth, quickly developed into a deadly situation as monitoring equipment indicated the baby's heart had stopped. As the baby exited the birth canal, the doctor discovered the umbilical cord had wrapped around the baby's neck and was strangling him. The baby boy's heartbeat had stopped. He became dark blue.

According to the grandfather, the doctor applied a maneuver that revealed years of experience and compassion as he undid the cord and resuscitated the child. Seconds later, the baby, turning to a pink complexion, let out his first cry and began to breathe.

The grandfather said that his family felt a tremendous gratitude for the wonderful, caring, professional performance by the medical team during the delivery of his first grandchild. He said they would always remember the wonderful performance by the Naval Hospital, Lemoore's maternity medical staff.

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Headline: Corps shows appreciation for dental support
By Earl W. Hicks, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--The Marine Corps dedicates many hours to training Marines and teaching them to fight. After all that effort, the Corps does not want to lose a hard-charging Marine because of an infected tooth.

To show their appreciation for helping the Corps maintain dental readiness, the Marine Corps Association presents the LTJG Weedon E. Osborne Award annually, which honors a dental officer who exhibits superior leadership while serving with Fleet Marine Forces (FMF). Osborne received the Medal of Honor posthumously for service in World War I.

This year's recipient is LT Christopher J. Cook, DC, a native of Ft. Thomas, Ky., who was assigned to 2D Dental Battalion, 2D Force Services Support Group when he earned the award. Cook's citation said he provided "inspirational leadership and technical expertise that contributed significantly to the operational readiness of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and to the II Marine Expeditionary Force.

"It is truly an honor to receive the LTJG Weedon E. Osborne Memorial Award," said Cook. "Deploying with the Marines in support of MEU Service Support Group-22 of the 22d MEU greatly developed my skills as a U. S. Navy Dental

Officer."

The Corps also recognizes a dental technician that made extraordinary contributions to Corps dental readiness with the Dentalman Thomas A. Christensen, Jr. Award. Christensen was awarded the Silver Star posthumously for service in the Korean conflict.

This year's Christensen Award winner is Dental Technician Third Class Shawn W. Staunches, from Glen Falls, NY, assigned to 2D Dental Battalion, 2D Force Services Support Group. Staunches's award indicated his contributions were instrumental in improving the operational readiness of supported Marine units.

Staunches said, "I am extremely honored to have been selected as this year's recipient of the Christensen award...I know the caliber of my shipmates serving in the FMF and I feel very fortunate."

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Headline: Okinawa will use Fleet Hospital modules during renovation

By LCDR J.J. Micho, NC, Naval Hospital, Okinawa

OKINAWA, Japan--This fall, a heating, ventilation and air conditioning remodeling at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa will showcase the facilities ability to maintain excellent customer service, even during maintenance work. When it is time for the construction to include the operating rooms and the central sterilization facility, fleet hospital modules will be used to provide temporary work areas, thereby assuring little disruption in surgical schedules.

The \$1.5 million project to update and completely renovate the heating and cooling will increase overall air handling efficiency and improve the comfort of patients and staff.

The fleet hospital operating rooms being used for this project are modern, state of the art, and self-contained modular units. These are the same type of units successfully used during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and are currently in use in all forward deployed fleet hospital units. They are completely functional operating rooms that meet all current hospital, surgical, fire and safety standards.

Although this will be the first time these units have been used at U. S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa, it's not the first time fleet hospital operating room units have been used as temporary replacements. Tripler Army Hospital, Hawaii, successfully used the fleet hospital operating rooms during renovations to their operating rooms in early 1990.

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Headline: TRICARE question and answer

Question: Will TRICARE exclude retirees from hospitals?

Answer: TRICARE eligible retirees, their family members and survivors who are enrolled in TRICARE Prime should have improved access to military hospitals. Those who decide not to enroll in Prime or who are not eligible (65 or over) may find their opportunities for space-available care reduced, because most of the space at military hospitals and clinics will be devoted to TRICARE Prime enrollees.

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Headline: Healthwatch: A dose of safety

By Kimberly Allen-Rawlings, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--When was the last time you cleaned out your medicine cabinet? Do you still have medication you took when you had the flu during the blizzard of 1996? Or maybe you bought medicine to cure heartburn the last time you ate really spicy food -- in 1994.

It's time to clean out your medicine cabinet. The same medications that helped you feel better at one time, could now make you sick if safety precautions are not taken.

All medications have an expiration date. Over the counter drugs have an expiration date on the package or bottle. If there is no expiration date, use the date the prescription was filled as a guide.

"As a rule of thumb, prescriptions drugs expire after one year," said LCDR Bill Blanche, MSC, pharmacist at Naval Hospital Jacksonville. "There could be a serious drug interaction between the old medication and any new medication you may be taking, including over the counter medication and herbs."

So, be wise. Discard any prescribed medications taken for a previous illness. Medications prescribed for one condition by a doctor should not be used for similar symptoms at a later date.

Do not share medications with anyone describing similar symptoms for which you took the medication. This could be very dangerous.

For your health follow these other medicine do and don'ts:

DO - ask your physician or pharmacist about side effects of prescribed drugs and whether to avoid driving or operating dangerous machinery.

DO - alert your physician or pharmacist if any new or unexpected symptoms or other problems appear.

DON'T - try a new medicine without first asking whether it's safe to use with other drugs you're taking.

DON'T - stop taking prescribed medicine just because symptoms disappear.

DON'T - crush or split pills without first checking with a doctor or pharmacist, as some should only be swallowed whole.

Clean out your medicine cabinets and follow the other safety precautions so that when you take medication to

soothe those aches and pains, the medicine will help and not hurt you.

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Comments about and ideas for MEDNEWS are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, Earl Hicks, at email: mednews@us.med.navy.mil; Telephone 202/762-3223, (DSN) 762-3223, or fax 202/762-3224.

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